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ABSTRACT

The Two-Year College Development Center invited representatives from two-year colleges throughout New York to attend a two-day meeting to address comprehensive health issues, particularly pertaining to the transmission and prevention of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), as well as other infectious and chronic diseases. The attending group of 37 administrators, faculty, and health professionals from 25 two-year colleges reached consensus on a list of critical health care issues facing two-year colleges, and small and large group discussions produced recommendations and strategies to deal with each issue. The following represents a selection of the issues and recommendations: (1) to deal with students' lack of information on basic health issues, it was recommended that the State Education Department strongly encourage prevention education on sexually transmitted and other communicable diseases and that a course be developed to cover specific health issues; (2) to address the need for two-year colleges to expand their mission to reflect community needs, it was recommended that two-year colleges become an educational resource for prevention and wellness behavior; and (3) to provide for the development of a comprehensive policy on communicable diseases, it was recommended that a statewide committee be convened to formulate a universal policy. The nine remaining issues relate to the need for increased awareness of multicultural aspects of community health; for a college environment that promotes wellness; for a proactive approach to combating substance abuse and violence on campus; to assist faculty, staff, and students in detecting substance abuse and making necessary referrals; to address the lack of administrator, faculty, and staff knowledge of procedures for dealing with blood and body fluids and with infectious persons; for adequate funding for allied health educational programs; to protect the rights of those inflected with the AIDS virus; to improve student success and retention rates in allied health programs; and for trained health care professionals. (PAA)

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Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Comprehensive Health Issues on Two-Year College Campuses

Two-Year College Development Center
University at Albany, State University of New York

in cooperation with

Office of Excellence and Access
New York State Education Department

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH ISSUES ON TWO-YEAR COLLEGE CAMPUSES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction.....	1
Project Activities.....	3
Comprehensive Health Issues Facing New York State Two-Year Colleges.....	5
Recommendations and Strategies.....	11
Summary Comments.....	21
Appendix A - List of Participants.....	23

Recommendations and Strategies for Addressing Comprehensive Health Issues in Two-Year Colleges

Introduction

The recommendations contained in this paper came into being because of the critical need for comprehensive health education in New York State and in our nation as a whole. Accidents, heart disease, and cancer are taking an increasing number of lives each year, and chronic social diseases such as anorexia and bulimia, herpes and chlamydia are increasing. Two significant factors contribute to this health crisis. Our society encourages behaviors which place the majority of us at risk, and, in response to this encouragement, we make personal decisions and lifestyle choices which are not wise in the light of current medical and scientific knowledge.

For example, over 38,000 New Yorkers have been diagnosed with AIDS since before 1980; over 25,000 of those have died. The "AIDS Surveillance Quarterly Update" in June of 1991 reported more than 18 percent of those diagnosed with AIDS are between the ages of 13 and 29, and almost 48 percent are between the ages of 30 and 39. Although white homosexual males and male drug users, both white and black, make up the majority of AIDS cases, heterosexual women -- white, black and Hispanic -- are contracting AIDS at an increasingly alarming rate, especially among the 20 to 39 age group.

The median age of the student population of most two-year colleges is 30, with the ages ranging from 17 to 85. Many of these students will be the first in their families to attend an institution of higher education. A large percentage may come from poverty or from isolated or segregated cultural environments. Further, an increasing number come with health problems, including being HIV infected and exhibiting symptoms of AIDS. Many of these students will want to enroll in not only the liberal arts and sciences curricula, but in the primary health care professional curricula such as nursing, respiratory therapy, and dental hygienist and assistant programs.

Education of this population has become increasingly important both in preventing the increase of persons at-risk of heart disease, cancer, and accidents and in slowing the advance of the HIV infection and AIDS epidemic. The emphasis is on risk reduction, empowering students to educate themselves and, therefore, to create their own health destiny. A first step is for the two-year colleges to educate its community through formal classes and informal activities about the issues surrounding wellness and the causes of disease. The next, more difficult step is to help students to define, develop, and reinforce behaviors that decrease their risk of disease and increase their level of wellness and their joy in living.

Project Activities

In response to the need of two-year colleges to address comprehensive health issues, the Two-Year College Development Center at the University at Albany, State University of New York, with grant support and assistance from the Office of Excellence and Access of the New York State Education Department, invited two-year college presidents throughout the State to send representatives from their institutions to attend a two-day meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to articulate the comprehensive health issues of two-year colleges and to make recommendations and suggest strategies to implement those recommendations.

Dr. Gene M. Winter, Director of the Two-Year College Development Center, welcomed the participants to the meeting. Introductory remarks were made by Mike Van Ryn, Assistant Commissioner for Excellence and Access. Dr. Ann Marie Haase, who is directing the Postsecondary AIDS Prevention Education Project, set the purpose for the meeting. Pamela Miller Williams, Associate Counsel of the State University of New York Central Administration, spoke on the legal issues regarding comprehensive health in two-year colleges. A discussion of resource materials available from the Department of Health was presented by Faith Schottenfeld; and Janet Atwater, Director of Health Services at Hudson Valley Community College and a member of the Board of Directors of the New York State College Health

Association, discussed the establishment of health services on campuses.

Thirty-seven administrators, faculty, and other health professionals from 25 two-year colleges attended the two-day session. A list of these professionals and their college affiliation constitutes Appendix A. Prior to the meeting, each participant was asked to submit a list of important health issues that should be considered by the group. During the meeting, participants refined and categorized the list of issues, and suggested strategies to implement their recommendations. These were compiled in draft form by staff of the Two-Year College Development Center and sent to each participant for reaction and further refinement. This paper presents the results of that process.

Comprehensive Health Issues Facing New York State Two-Year Colleges

The first challenge presented to the conference participants was to identify and clarify the critical comprehensive health issues facing two-year colleges in New York State. The following list of issues represent a consensus of the participants.

1) Students Lack Sufficient Information on Basic Health Issues

Some colleges offer credit and non-credit courses on selected health related topics. However, few, if any, have addressed the wider perspective of a coordinated and comprehensive approach to health and wellness. Although students receive selected information about health from various sources such as the media, academic classes, peers, medical doctors or college nurses, they appear to have little understanding of basic facts and concepts about health and wellness practices which may impact their short and long-term academic success as well as the quality of their entire lives.

2) Two-year Colleges Need to Expand Their Mission to Reflect Community Needs

Two-year colleges should take an active role in educating community members as well as students in appropriate prevention and wellness behaviors. In addition, colleges should contribute to productive changes in public health regulations and laws to allow for a more responsible

approach to health care delivery to the community which surrounds it as well as the campus population.

3) Colleges Need to Have a Comprehensive Policy on Issues Relating to all Aspects of Communicable Diseases

The need exists on every campus for a policy that encompasses the issues related to all aspects of communicable diseases and the legal, moral, and ethical responsibilities of the college to its faculty, staff and students. Issues such as compliance with public health policy, exposure, confidentiality, and responsibilities to employees and the community must be discussed in order to effectively deal with the problems caused by communicable diseases.

4) There is a Need for Increased Awareness of Multicultural Aspects of Health in the Community

Approaches to comprehensive health strategies must encompass the multicultural response to illnesses and diseases. Often ethnic, racial and gender groups are affected differently by particular diseases and these differences often lead to misunderstandings and fears which can lead to discriminatory practices among peers and between staff and students. The differences between how these diseases and illnesses affect certain groups must be understood so that a more effective plan for prevention and treatment can be developed.

5) Colleges Need to Actively Address General Health and Wellness Issues

A comprehensive health and wellness program is needed at each institution so that each individual is taught to assume responsibility for his or her own health and wellness. A wellness program might address the following:

A) Physical wellness - Individuals need the opportunity to enhance their physical wellness by means of proper nutrition, sufficient exercise and sleep, adequate housing, cancer prevention, substance misuse, and sexual health awareness.

B) Emotional wellness - Individuals need to enhance their emotional wellness in regard to self-esteem, coping skills, recognition of emotional stress, balancing roles and responsibilities, caregiving, problems of non-traditional students, role changes, and parenting skills.

C) Eliminating personal and environmental risks and dangers - Individuals need to adequately identify and eliminate personal and environmental risks and dangers including: local community concerns (e.g., pollution problems unique to the area) and environmental health (smoke-free campus, proper ventilation). In addition, individuals need to be well informed about ways to prevent household and work place accidents.

6) There is a Need to Develop a Comprehensive Approach to Combatting Substance Abuse and Violence on College Campuses

Currently, a significant number of two-year college faculty, staff, and students are victims of physical and emotional abuse, including rape and sexual harassment. The underlying causes are diverse; however, they include such problems as drug and alcohol abuse, lack of knowledge, and administration of community resources which is reactionary rather than proactive in nature.

7) Many Faculty, Staff, and Students Lack Knowledge of Ways to Detect Substance Abuse and Make Necessary Referrals

Drug and alcohol abuse continues to be one of the leading causes of accidents, injuries and assaults on college campuses. The financial and emotional costs of these abuses are staggering. Despite their critical nature, many faculty, staff, and students are unaware of the ways substance abuse can be detected and know little about the process for referring abusers to the appropriate programs and agencies.

8) Faculty and Staff Lack Knowledge of Procedures for Dealing with Blood and Body Fluids and with Infectious Persons

Most persons in the allied health field have training in universal safety precautions. Many faculty and staff in other curricular areas are unaware of the proper protocol for handling infectious blood and body fluids. There is a need for all faculty and staff to know universal safety procedures and follow guidelines for that such as those established by the Centers for Disease Control.

9) Adequate Funding is Needed for Allied Health Educational Programs

The budget crisis has taken its toll on allied health and other instructional programs. Current funding is inadequate for the maintenance of high standards required for the health professions at many two-year colleges. Additional funding is critical for such things as the achievement and maintenance of accreditation standards and state mandates,

the purchase and maintenance of equipment, and faculty development.

10) There is a Need for Protection of Rights for Those Infected with HIV

The rights of persons with physical or emotional disabilities are protected by national and state law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the New York State Disability Act). Currently, people living with HIV infection and AIDS are classified as disabled, and should be allowed the same privileges, rights, and protection as other persons with disabilities under current law. The college campus should take a leadership role in ensuring that these rights are granted without discrimination.

11) There is a Need to Improve Student Success and Retention Rates in the Allied Health Care Curriculum

The current rate of student retention and successful program completion is unacceptable. In view of the fact that there are serious shortages of qualified health care professionals in the field today, it is imperative that this issue be addressed to prevent a worsening of the problem.

12) There are Shortages of Trained Health Care Professionals

A shortage of trained and qualified health professionals exists in many allied health fields. The factors which have contributed to this problem include the increase of an aging population, the growth of the general population, and the

dramatic increase of infectious and communicable diseases. In addition, during the last few years, the pool of applicants for programs in the health professions has decreased, and student graduation rates have been lower than desirable.

Recommendations and Strategies

The second challenge of the conference participants was to make recommendations and develop strategies which address the identified issues. Small and large group discussions during the working conference and individual reactions to a draft document subsequent to the conference produced the following recommendations and strategies.

ISSUE 1 To confront student's lack of sufficient information on basic health issues, the following recommendations are set forth:

A) The State Education Department and/or other regulatory bodies should strongly encourage academic institutions to include prevention education on HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and other communicable diseases in their curricula. Assessments of these programs should be based on observable student behavior change.

B) All colleges should provide information on basic health issues such as AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and other communicable diseases to new students during orientation and freshman seminars, and other meetings of incoming students throughout the year.

C) A course(s) should be designed for all students that includes the following topics:

- HIV infection and AIDS
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Other communicable diseases
- Stress and mental health

- High risk maternal and newborn

- Parenting skills

- Violence issues, such as domestic violence, rape and assault

- Substance abuse

- Intergenerational issues

- Unhealthy lifestyle

- Self-esteem

- Sexual harassment

The following strategies have been listed for consideration in addressing the above recommendations:

- There should be a multi-discipline faculty approach to course development.

- Student activity funds should be used for health programming.

- The Health Office should be the hub of information-gathering and dissemination.

- Existing community resources should be promoted.

- Universal safety precautions should be taught throughout the curriculum.

- Policies and procedures of clinical affiliates should be included in the curriculum where appropriate.

- Library collections on comprehensive health issues should be maintained by trained professionals.

- Educate the companion to the curriculum, the faculty member. Faculty development is the strategy.

- Faculty should be taught to be fair and comfortable in dealing with controversial issues.

- Ensure that all students receive instruction in comprehensive health issues and practice in prevention strategies.

- Collaborative working relationships between academic affairs, student services, administrative

services, and community services must be promoted by colleges to address the issues and problems discussed in this paper.

ISSUE 2 To address the need for two-year colleges to expand their mission to reflect community needs, the following are recommended:

A) Two-year colleges should become an educational resource for prevention and wellness behavior.

(1) Appropriate conferences and workshops should be developed for the college and community.

(2) A college wellness committee, consisting of representatives from the community as well as the college, should be formed to coordinate these activities as well as the integration of these issues into campus curriculum, such as stress management for accounting majors.

(3) Use available community public health agencies as a resource.

(4) Encourage and support student organizations to become actively involved.

(5) Seek external grant funding to support expanded programs.

B) Two-year colleges should become more actively involved in recommending changes or modifications in public health laws. Appropriate two-year college staff members should be meeting with community agencies on a regular basis to discuss these issues and to cooperate in making recommendations.

ISSUE 3 **To provide for the development of a comprehensive policy on issues relating to all aspects of communicable diseases, it is recommended that:**

A) A statewide committee should be convened to formulate a universal policy that encompasses issues related to communicable diseases, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control.

B) The work of the committee will consist of drafting a universal model policy to include statements on comprehensive health issues such as public health policies, exposure guidelines, confidentiality and counseling. The activity could be coordinated by the Two-Year College Development Center and should be completed by June, 1992.

ISSUE 4 **To address the need for increased awareness of multicultural aspects of health in the community, it is recommended that:**

A) Faculty development seminars and informational activities on health issues include a focus on "Balancing the Curriculum for Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class" (GREC) and that faculty and staff be encouraged to integrate the facts into their instructional activities.

B) Librarians and health professionals should collect and disseminate information on this subject across the campus.

ISSUE 5 **To address the need for a general health and wellness program, each two-year college should provide an environment that promotes wellness. Recommendations and strategies designed to accomplish this task include:**

- Establish a Standing Committee of the Faculty Senate on Health and Wellness to address holistic issues

and encourage faculty participation.

- Offer credit and non-credit, required and elective courses on health-related subjects to students, staff, administrators and faculty.

- Offer workshops, seminars, and brown-bag discussions on various wellness/health topics.

- Encourage student participation, leadership, and promotion of wellness issues.

- Develop a campus publication on ways to live healthier.

- Integrate wellness issues into the general education objectives of the college.

- Develop a smoke-free work and academic environment.

- Make condoms readily and anonymously available to both males and females on campus.

- Provide health services and emergency services on campus for students, faculty, administrators and staff.

- Offer low cost group health insurance to full and part-time students, faculty, administrators and staff.

- Develop a campus referral service for existing community resources.

- Provide access for students, staff, administrators, and faculty to healthy foods on campus every day and evening the campus is open.

- Ensure that nutritional guidelines are provided on all food served in the cafeteria.

- Develop a general safety policy, according to OSHA standards, which will apply to academic and non-academic areas.

- Promote exercise programs on campus for the entire campus community; encourage regular physical activity such as walking, jogging, and bicycling.

- Sponsor a general "Wellness Day" on campus each semester.

- Encourage self-help groups, such as Alcoholics

Anonymous, to meet regularly on campus to assist those in need.

- Ban the use of alcohol on campus and do not make it available on campus.

- Train employees in CPR and First Aid in each campus building.

- Offer seminars on defensive driving and safe winter driving on campus.

- Provide date and acquaintance rape awareness and prevention training to the entire college community.

- Promote and encourage cancer testing, e.g., breast self-examinations and mammography and testicular self-examinations for students, faculty, administrators and staff members.

- Coordinate activities with other two-year and four-year colleges in the area for sharing of information and resources.

ISSUE 6 **To combat substance abuse and violence on college campuses, it is recommended that a proactive approach be formulated on every campus to deal with these problems.**

A) To address violence and abuse concerns, it is recommended that:

- Inservice programs be offered to explore the link between behavioral and social factors related to abuse and violence.

- Affirmative action policies be strengthened.

- Stress management counseling be provided.

- Workshops and information be provided on sexual harassment prevention and procedures for addressing complaints from students, staff, and faculty members.

- Workshops to enhance self esteem be offered.

- Referral resources for social and personal problems should be developed.

- Current information on referral services and agencies should be available to counselors and

faculty.

- The college community interact more in addressing these issues.

- Support groups be established, such as: parenting, victims of abuse and violence, and anger and stress management.

B) To confront the problems of substance abuse, the following strategies are recommended:

- Develop more support groups on campus for those in need of services, e.g., AA, Al-Anon, Alateen.

- Encourage insurance companies to provide more comprehensive services to encompass rehabilitation programs. Services for people with AIDS and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome should be included.

- Develop appropriate counseling and referral services on campus for the alcoholic and the drug abuser.

- Provide ample printed materials for public consumption.

- Incorporate more health education in the college curriculum regarding over the counter drugs and steroids.

- Develop educational programs which include topics such as self esteem, self defense, and assertiveness training.

ISSUE 7 To assist faculty, staff, and students in detecting substance abuse and making necessary referrals, it is recommended that:

A) Every campus have a training component on campus for counselors and student services employees that would focus on the identification of abuse problems.

B) Appropriate staff should recommend and coordinate educational programs within formal classroom settings.

C) Ongoing training programs for counseling personnel and interested faculty and staff be held on recognizing abuse victims and initiating beginning interventions.

ISSUE 8: To address the lack of administrator, faculty and staff knowledge of procedures for dealing with infectious blood and body fluids and infectious persons, and it is recommended that:

A) College administrations should work closely with public health staff, faculty, and students to ensure that correct health guidelines covering exposure to potentially contaminated body fluids and infectious diseases are in accord with current CDC protocol. There should be designated personnel who will oversee this to make sure up-to-date procedures are followed.

B) Special seminars and workshops and inservice training be developed on proper procedures for dealing with infectious blood and body fluids, those people infected with communicable diseases, and on substance abuse detection and referral processes.

C) Close collaboration must exist between academic affairs, student services, community services and administrative services to meet these instructional goals.

D) All faculty, administrators and staff members, regardless of discipline, should be required to take part in these educational programs.

ISSUE 9 **To address funding needs for health related educational programs it is recommended that:**

College administrators and health professionals vigorously present their realistic funding needs to college planning and curriculum committees as well as to local and state policymakers who make important fiscal decisions. In addition, every attempt must be made to insure that all appropriated funds are used productively and efficiently.

ISSUE 10 **To protect the rights of those infected with HIV/ AIDS it is recommended that:**

A) A clear, concise policy should be implemented that guarantees a person's right to privacy and non-discrimination while on campus.

B) Mechanisms should be established to ensure the confidentiality of health records, including computer access and any other media, and to establish quality control.

C) A complaint procedure should be established for those individuals whose rights have been violated, and a policy for dealing with those who violate these rights.

D) A public information program should be developed to inform the college community on individual and group rights, responsibilities, and human value issues.

ISSUE 11 **To improve student retention and successful completion rates in the allied health care curriculum, it is recommended that support service should be provided to include but not be limited to:**

- preparatory and developmental courses for under-prepared applicants
- mentoring and tutoring

- sufficient and timely advisement
- child care
- health services
- elder care
- survival skill courses
- alternative health insurance plans and
- creative scheduling

ISSUE 12 **To combat the shortages of qualified health care professionals in the field, a comprehensive recruitment program must be initiated. This recruitment plan must include:**

- targeting for underrepresented populations
- market strategies for all health professional programs
- efforts which emphasize student entry preparedness within civil rights guidelines to improve upon the quality of the applicants
- development of alternative pathways provided for underprepared applicants

Summary Comments

The contents of this document present needs, directions and challenges for every two-year college and its community. The importance of these health issues demand attention and action. Even though resources currently are in very short supply, much can be done on a campus if administrative, faculty and staff leaders from both academic and student affairs will publicly recognize the importance of health issues on campus and provide visibility and encouragement to health educators and professionals to initiate action.

Many of the recommendations and strategies in this report involve locally designed professional development and public information activities for which professional expertise may be present on the campus and in the community. Regional cooperation and sharing among two- and four-year campuses and community agencies, are other strategies that can maximize the impact of programs undertaken with limited resources.

Leadership and support from the state level is also needed. Health professionals would appreciate help in keeping abreast of statewide policies, legal decisions, informational resources and potential grant or other financial support sources. The recommendations following issue #3 specifically seek state level leadership to convene a committee to draft model policy statements that would speed the development of policies on communicable diseases on individual campuses.

In these times of shrinking budgets, pressures for increased academic achievement and wider access to higher education's opportunities, addressing comprehensive health issues can easily be pushed down the list of priority concerns. We hope this publication will reverse this tendency and lead to productive activities to increase the health and wellness of students, staff and community of two-year colleges across the state.

APPENDIX A

Listed below are the professional educators, and their affiliated colleges, who participated in the Task Force and whose ideas comprise this publication.

Name	Title	College
Joseph Gay	Dean/Health Sciences	Broome Community College
Madeline Uhl	College Nurse	Corning Community College
Geraldine Pozzi-Galluzi	Dept. Head/Allied Health	Dutchess Community College
Marlon Siegel	Respiratory Care	Erie Comm. College/North
Marvin J. Herman	Dept. Head/Dental Tech.	Erie Comm. College/South
Rita Rooney	Director/Health Services	Fashion Inst. of Technology
Audrey Toscano	Asst. Prof./Nursing	Fulton-Montgomery Comm. College
Katherine Schwabach	Asst. Dean/Counselor	Herkimer Co. Comm. College
Donna Testa	Assistant Professor	Herkimer Co. Comm. College
Ruth Nicholson	Coordinator	Seton School of Iona College
Alice Stephens	Director/Health Serv.	Seton School of Iona College
Sheila Tyranski	College Health Nurse	Seton School of Iona College
Dorothy Oakley	Associate Professor	Jamestown Community College
Francine Egger	Cataloger/Instructor	LaGuardia Community College
William Coleman	Assistant Professor	Borough of Manhattan C.C.
Avor Cave	Associate Professor	Borough of Manhattan C.C.
Safiya Ellis-Bandele	Dir./Ctr. for Women Dev.	Medgar Evers Comm. College
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Denise DiGiorgio	Dean/Student Services	Mohawk Valley Comm. College
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Edward J. D'Anna	AIDS Resource Librarian	Monroe Community College
Connie Bush	Assoc. Prof./Nursing	Niagara Co. Comm. College
Sal Passanese	Assoc. Prof./Biology	Niagara Co. Comm. College
Ethel Devone	Senior Health Educator	New York City Tech. College
Cheryl Smith	Dean/Health/Human Serv.	New York City Tech. College
Barbara Kellum	Chairperson/Nursing	Orange Co. Comm. College
Kathleen Dugan	Coordinator/Health Serv.	Orange Co. Comm. College
Norma Dayton	Professor	Queensborough Comm. College
Audre Spatz	Professor	Rockland Community College
Lois Hooverman	Assoc. Prof./Biology	Schenectady Co. Comm. College
Olga Henderson	Instructor/Coordinator	Suffolk Co. Comm. Coll./East
Lois Sayles Woods	Associate Dean	SUCAT/Morrisville
Mary Schinner	Dean/Health Sciences	Trocaire College
Shirley Krembs	Chairperson/Nursing	Ulster Co. Comm. College
Roberta Gavner	Assoc. Prof./Nursing	Ulster Co. Comm. College
Calvin Johnson	Assoc. Dean/Nat./Health	Westchester Comm. College
Anne McCabe	Coord./Health Services	Westchester Comm. College

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